

## **Ch. 3 District-wide policies and strategies**

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## **Introduction**

This chapter describes some of the overall or higher level goals and aspirations of Walker's Point based on the values expressed by participants during the planning process. These policy and strategic recommendations are organized by topic and not specific action items. They help decision-makers make informed decisions regarding a wide variety of community development issues, some of which might be entirely unforeseeable. They also help frame or guide the location-specific recommendations to come in later chapters.

### **3. 1 Overall goals**

As described in Ch. 2, Walker's Point has an identifiable sense of place and community, yet it is very diverse in terms of its people, building stock, and urban character. This diversity is an inherent of its identity. Yet certain themes and aspirations emerge again and again.

Diverse. Walker's Point should accentuate its mix of people: multicultural, multi-ethnic, a mixture of economic and social class, and sexual orientation. This mixture is reflected in its variety of housing, retail, and workplaces.

**Affordable and Sustainable.** Part of what makes Walker's Point so dynamic is that its building stock offers a wealth of affordable and flexible work spaces and live/work lofts.

**Walkable and Bikeable.** Walker's Point needs a "Complete Street" design philosophy or "sustainable street network principles" that support communities and places, maximizes choices, attracts economic activity, integrates with natural systems, and emphasize walking and biking as fundamental. This is a challenge in a community with two state highways and substantial manufacturing with concomitant truck traffic.

**Inventive and Authentic.** Walker's Point residents and businesses have a "Do it yourself attitude/culture comprising entrepreneurs, small businesses, craftspeople, artists, innovative restaurateurs, as well as designers and marketers. These are people who get things done. And they do it in historical buildings.

One of the challenges for Walker's Point is that if a person parachuted into Walker's Point and landed at random, he or she might never find Walker's Point at all. Can one dare to summarize a vision of Walker's Point in one sentence?

A historical, mixed-use, sustainable community where neighborhood markets, restaurants, retail shops and a walk-to-work office and manufacturing community are combined with residential living and public gathering areas creating an "urban village."

Keep in mind that these recommendations build on and refined those found in the Area Plan.

### **3.2 Create a fully functional community**

Sometimes there is a risk that a neighborhood experiencing rapid change and redevelopment can become too one-sided. It might become attractive to expensive condos, high rent apartments, and well established businesses that can crowd out long-term residents, smaller businesses, older industries, and artists. That need not happen in Walker's Point and participants have said that they don't want that to happen.

Walker's Point has families that have lived in the district for three generations. It has schools. It has manufacturers who would like to stay in the area.

Participants have said they would like to continue to be a district that has economic and ethnic diversity, that is welcoming to families, offers neighborhood retail and services,

and that is walkable and bikeable. These factors combine to create a place that is a real neighborhood, that feels like a community, and not just a destination, a place to drive through, or to live for a couple of years.

Achieving this goal will require enhancing the mix of businesses in the district, especially offering everyday kinds of goods and services, sometimes called neighborhood retail. A grocery store was often mentioned as desirable and a prospective development would locate one on the northeast corner of 1st St. and Greenfield Ave. in the southern part of the district. Smaller retail businesses would still be required farther north.

### **3.3 Promote and preserve diverse development types in distinct places**

Looking at Walker's Point today, one sees a district with different types of neighborhoods and places offering a variety of lifestyles. People in Walker's Point see this as desirable. They understand that multi-family buildings / mixed uses will be attracted to larger existing buildings on larger lots. They want to preserve and enhance their main streets on S. 2nd. St and S. 5th St. And they want to preserve the historical duplex / single family neighborhoods. Because Walker's Point is a large district and already has these different neighborhoods and places, achieving this goal is very attainable. See Figs. \_\_\_ through \_\_\_.

Fig. \_\_\_ Wood frame cottage in the Clock Tower neighborhood (S. 3rd St. and W. Orchard St.



Fig. \_\_ Duplexes in the heart of Walker's Point (S. 4th and W. Mineral Sts.)



Fig. \_\_ Conversion of loft warehouse into residential (S. Water and Pittsburgh Sts.)



Fig. \_\_ Rehabilitated main street storefronts on S. 2nd and W. Bruce Sts.



Fig. \_\_ Rehabilitated main street storefront on S. 5th and W. Washington Sts.



### **3.4 Preserve existing and attract new manufacturing companies and jobs**

As seen in Ch. 2, much of northern Walker's Point is zoned Mixed-Use, a very flexible zoning district which permits residential and light manufacturing. Although it is anticipated that market forces will lead to the conversion of much of this area to residential and commercial, the plan recommends a continued focus on retaining and attracting jobs in these areas and even changing zoning in some instances to exclusively preserve manufacturing. (See section 4.\_\_\_)

- Mixed use development of residential and commercial work space is encouraged.
- Continue to focus on retaining and attracting a variety of businesses: large and small businesses; creative, technology, or artisanal food based businesses; as well as entrepreneurial or established.
- Maintain and create affordable space for small businesses looking for creative space with few amenities. Affordability can be achieved by design; buildings can be redeveloped for safety and comfort needs only with all other improvements completed by individual tenants.

### **3.5 Increase the quantity and variety of housing**

Walker's Point appears to have significant demand and capacity for additional building conversions into apartments and condos. The percentage of urban residents who live along is growing. Walker's Point should maintain a mix of housing to fit all socio-economic groups.



- Evaluate introducing more micro-housing, co-housing and housing for families to the mix of housing, understanding that new forms of housing will receive a higher level of discussion and review

Micro-housing sometimes refers to apartments that are the size of large hotel rooms -- 220 feet or so. In some cases units might share a kitchen. These cases are likely to not meet the current zoning code. Proposals for these kinds of housing have been controversial in some communities. While they offer opportunity for Walker's Point, this recommendation to move forward using the City's planning and approval processes.

Seattle is grappling with how to regulate these types of housing.

[http://seattletimes.com/html/localnews/2024414112\\_microhousing1xml.html](http://seattletimes.com/html/localnews/2024414112_microhousing1xml.html)

The purpose of having different types of housing is to accommodate a person who wishes to live in Walker's Point as they move through different household situations and income levels.

"The ideal location for millennials is a place in which a person could feel safe, raise children, enjoy a good meal and walk to work without breaking the bank."

*Source:* <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/local/wp/2014/06/17/how-to-keep-millennials-in-the-district>

### **3.6 Maintain historical character by rehabilitating existing buildings**

Most buildings in Walker's Point, historic or not, contribute to the overall authenticity and character of the neighborhood. They provide a rich fabric of consistent and authentic building stock ready for renovation and reuse.

One of Walker's Point key assets is its huge stock of historical and historic buildings. "Historical", ending in "-al", is used here to refer to old and possibly interesting and beautiful buildings in general. One Web definition is, "of or concerning history; concerning past events." "Historic", without the "-al" ending, rises to a higher standard, defined on one web page as, "famous or important in history, or potentially so."

Walker's Point has both kinds of buildings. Participants expressed a strong preference for using the buildings that already exist over a strategy of removing and replacing buildings. In some cases, former industrial or warehouse buildings have tremendous structural capacity that could be adaptively reused for offices, residents, and other

creative purposes. Sometimes doing so requires imagination and a good architect to deal with large floor plates, oddly spaced columns, or unconventional ceiling heights.

Historical buildings on main streets define the character of neighborhood. The S. 5th / 6th Sts. and National Ave. area has many noteworthy buildings, as does 2nd St.

Even modest homes in the traditional single-family and duplex neighborhoods provide opportunities to experience how Milwaukeeans have lived for decades and are often treasured by their residents.

- Reuse building stock instead of tearing it down

The teardown or demolition of viable historical buildings, especially multi-story warehouse buildings, to assemble large property tracts for large new developments is strongly discouraged in order to build on Walker Point's strengths. On sites where buildings have been razed, new developments should have to meet a higher quality standard and provide additional neighborhood amenities. The exception to the demolition recommendation is large one-story, block or metal panel buildings, constructed in between 1950 and today. These buildings are difficult to reuse for uses other than storage, garages and underutilize the property.

There are good economic arguments for preserving historical buildings:

*"Older buildings become magnets for young people and retirees alike, researchers said. They draw more shops, restaurants, entertainment venues, small businesses owned by women and minorities, and jobs. On a per-square-foot basis, small building corridors have a larger concentration of jobs, businesses and creative sector jobs than downtown skyscrapers. In Seattle, commercial areas with smaller, more age-diverse buildings have 36.8 percent more jobs per square foot than areas with newer, larger buildings."*

*"Historic corridors in these cities are often active from morning to night, said lead researcher Michael Powe, an urban planner with the National Trust's Preservation Green Lab. In D.C., these areas draw more non-chain, local businesses. In San Francisco, they generate more jobs based in small businesses."*

Source: "Older, Smaller, Better -- Measuring how the character of buildings and blocks influences urban vitality." National Trust for Historic Preservation, Preservation Green Lab.

<http://www.preservationnation.org/information-center/sustainable-communities/green-lab/oldersmallerbetter/> Study: <http://oldersmallerbetter.org>

See Ch. 4 section 4.2



### **3.7 Design new buildings to create authenticity**

The Near South Side Plan, p. 58 - 59, makes nine recommendations regarding form policies and 12 policies regarding "redevelopment strategies." Most of these concern the traditional relationship between the private realm and the public realm found in many older communities. This relationship tends to promote walkability, a pleasant and functional street experience, and human-scaled design elements such as ground floor windows facing the street. New development in Walker's Point should reflect its own unique patterns of development.

There is no recommendation that new development needs to reflect historical architectural styles of surrounding buildings. Although good architecture sometimes references traditional architectural styles, it is more important that new buildings be good buildings in their own right. It is more important that buildings reflect their place in the urban landscape than the historical periods and styles in which neighboring buildings were built. Suburban architecture is particularly discouraged. Fortunately, many good examples of new architecture fitting within the existing fabric already exist. A few examples are:

- The new office building, Castings Point Tower, at the southeast corner of 1st and Water Sts.,
- The Clockshadow Building located on the northeast corner of 2nd and Bruce. Sts.
- In a more traditional style, due to brick arches and a cornice, is The Waterfront at the northeast corner of 1st St and S. Water St. The details of the building are reminiscent of Walker's Point industrial and warehousing heritage.

Fig. \_\_ Castings Point Tower



Fig. \_\_ Clockshadow building



Fig. \_\_ The Waterfront



### **3.8 Emphasize "Sustainable Street Network Principles" and "Complete Streets"**

The City of Milwaukee has taken many steps in recent years toward making its street system more sustainable and "complete." Walker's Point, as an emerging urban neighborhood near downtown, is a good location to continue and further develop these practices.

"Sustainable street network principles" as described by the Congress for the New Urbanism in a publication of the same name calls for streets that support communities and places, maximizes choices, attracts economic activity, integrates with natural systems, and emphasizes walking and biking as fundamental. Recognizing that following these principles is a challenge in a community with two state highways and substantial manufacturing with concomitant truck traffic, it is especially important to emphasize them in decision-making regarding infrastructure.

<http://www.cnu.org/cnu-news/2012/01/cnus-sustainable-street-network-principles>,

A similar concept is described as a "Complete Street" design philosophy by the National Complete Streets Coalition.

<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets>

Streets play a much greater role in the life of a city than moving motor vehicle traffic in two directions. Walking and biking to be served as well because they play an important role is serving shorter trips in a very economical and ecological manner. Neighborhoods that are walkable and bikeable tend to promote more secure neighborhoods because of "eyes on the street" and a healthier population by providing more exercise, less noise and emissions. Streets play a vital role in the aesthetics of the city, because they are public space and provide the perspective by which we perceive the city. Streets convey storm water, both underground, and in very intense storms, on the surface. By adding trees and planting, this function can operate much more efficiently. Trees slow down the rate that rain falls on the ground, reducing peak demand. Permeable surfaces, paved and unpaved decrease the amount of water transported and improve the quality.

All of these principles are vital to the growth and development of Walker's Point. Because of its history as an industrial center, much of its surface is covered by impermeable surfaces. Planting strips along streets that are de rigueur in other parts of town are often missing. The recent reconstruction of S. 2nd St. shows the night and day difference that a sensitive street reconstruction can make in the vitality of the community and its economy.

- Provide space for a Bikeshare station in 2014 and for Zipcars, expected in 2015. Public street parking cannot be reserved for Zipcars per state law. (Repeated in Section 4.8.5.

### **3.9 Support Creative Place Making Techniques in creating a sense of community**

Introduction: There are currently three different community-led initiatives to create a sense of place in Walker's Point. These efforts combine new trends of involving local artists and community members in processes that utilize art integration to create unique neighborhood identity and image with traditional urban design and main street efforts such as store fronts with doors and windows that open directly to the street (public realm) and streetscaping such as benches and banners.

What:

Create visual gateways into neighborhoods, focus attention on special nodes and landmarks such as the entrance to Freshwater Way, and use art integration to address unique aesthetic challenges such as lighting railroad bridges.

How:

- Arts @ Large is leading an initiative called the Creative Corridor / Corredor Creativo to highlight S. 5th St. and its cultural attractions such as the Walker's Point Art Center, Brenner Brewing's new artist space, and a re-purposed Paliafito Park. The initiative is also involved in the physical redesign of the street. See Section 5.1.
- A coalition on S. 2nd St. has prepared a South SecondScape Public Artscape Identity Plan that is full of inspiring ideas ranging from way finding signage to defining the entire street as an open air art gallery. See Section 4.5 "Continue establishing S. 2nd St. as a main street."
- The Walker's Point Innovation District covers 93 acres focused on two important east-west streets in northern Walker's Point, namely Pittsburgh St / Freshwater Way and Florida St. A campus on E. Florida would provide support for a startup, accelerator, and academic hub of creative space, services, and educational programming. See Section 4.XXX

### **3.10 Exploit unconventional opportunities for green space.**

Chapter 4 lists specific recommendations for green space. In general, Walker's Point, despite its density, has great opportunities for reconnecting residents with growing, living green space.

- Continue the river walk along the Milwaukee River and add green space that functions as green infrastructure such as bioswales and rainwater parks where possible.
- Plant the private side of sidewalk where public planting strips along streets are not feasible.

Fig. \_\_ Independence First.





- When railroads are abandoned, acquire the rights-of-way to extend trail systems.
- Create green roofs.
- Plant on vacant lots.

### **XYZ Additional topics**

1. Existing Building Stock
  - Discuss amount of underutilized properties – opportunity for development
  - Obstacles for developments
2. Additional need for what retail?
  - (Material from surveys)
3. Revitalizing Housing
  - Modest homes in the traditional single-family and duplex neighborhoods provide opportunities to experience how Milwaukeeans have lived for decades and are treasured by their residents. Examine violations. Program.